



**A STUDY OF CORNEILLE'S RELATIONS
TO HIS SPANISH SOURCES**

**A COMPARISON OF LE MENTEUR AND
LA VERDAD SOSPECHOSA**

BY

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CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION

SPANISH DRAMATIC PRINCIPLES - FRENCH UNITIES

The dramatic principles of the Spanish dramatists were radically different from those of the French dramatists, and, despite the recent publication of serious studies concerning several of the dramatic manifestos that have come down to us, these principles are not so well understood by the average student of things dramatic as they should be. Therefore it is necessary, before doing anything else, to set forth briefly what were the ideas that dominated the Spanish stage and its authors during the Golden Age. Spain, too, had her defenders of the so-called classical rules, but they were unable to make much headway against the movement, which, headed by Lope de Vega, culminated in the national school and endowed Spain with a national theatre that was the very embodiment of her national life.

Juan de la Cueva in his Exemplar poetico, written in 1606, shows himself a fervent defender of the new Spanish manner of writing plays, and a frank critic of the older manner, whether in Spain or in Greece and Rome. But he is not very specific in his recommendations, although his own plays that have survived show that he had no use for the unities of time or place.

In 1609 Lope de Vega wrote and published a facetious dramatic manifesto in defense of the new school, his celebrated Arte Nuevo de Hacer Comedias en Este Tiempo. The principal points made are as follows: The subject having been chosen, let the author be careful to mingle duly the comic and the tragic, for this variety gives much pleasure. Nature herself gives us a good example in that her beauty arises from such variety. The subject chosen should have only one action, and the story should not be episodic. Lope is careful to explain that he means that it should contain no episodes which detract from the original purpose. There is no need to limit the action to twenty-four hours, although Aristotle so advises, for we lost our respect for Aristotle when we mingled the comic and the tragic. The action should take place in the shortest time possible, except when the author is dealing with history, in which some years are to pass. In this case let him suppose that the years intervene in the entre-actes. Even the twenty-four hour day is unnatural, since Spanish patience will not put up with a play longer than two hours. The matter should be treated in three acts of approximately equal length. The handling should contain two parts: the first containing the exposition and development, and the second the dénouement. These two parts are naturally not of equal length, for the latter must be held off as long as possible, and certainly until near the middle of the third act, in order to keep up the interest of the public. The stage should seldom be left empty. The style should always be correct, except where deliberately meant to ape the language of the illiterate; in any case it should always be appropriate to the character speaking, and the actors must conduct

themselves as befits the rôle they are playing. Avoid the impossible, since it is a maxim that only the possible is to be imitated. Certain types of verse are suited to certain kinds of scenes, and should be used accordingly. Lope admits that all these suggestions are contrary to the rules of dramatic art as accepted by the Classicists; but he claims that the plays that he has written have been in accord with these suggestions, that they have met with popular approval, and that he is convinced that they would not have given as much pleasure to the public if they had been composed according to the Classic rules.

In 1616 appeared at Valencia the Norte de la poesía española. As a preface thereto we find two discussions of the new drama by two Valencian dramatists: Ricardo de Turia, with his Apologético de las Comedias españolas; and Carlos Boyl, with a Romance a un licenciado que deseava hacer comedias. These are both representatives of the so-called Valencian School, which followed the lead of Lope de Vega. Both advance the same kind of arguments in defence of the new movement, but in general present them much more forcibly than did Lope. The mixed nature of the Spanish comedia is again stressed, as is also the fact that Spanish plays were written to please the public who patronized them and who wished this kind of play and not such as were written in accord with the Classic rules. Ricardo de Turia explains at some length the purpose of the rôle of gracioso; and Carlos Boyl gives his would-be playwright very definite instructions concerning versification, style, composition, subjects, accessories, and kinds of comedia.

In 1624 Tirso de Molina published his Cigarrales de Toledo, and here we find a still more carefully argued manifesto in defence

of the Spanish manner of writing plays, and here better than in the others we find defended the naturalness of the constant mingling of the comic and the tragic.

There are other defenders of the new order who might be cited, but it has seemed to me preferable to use only these five, all of whom were not only theorists concerning dramatic art, but actually practitioners thereof.

As opposed to these somewhat free and easy rules of the Spanish theater, Corneille was obliged to conform to the strict and rigid rules of the French theater with its unities of time, place and action, which Boileau summarized in his Art Poétique in the celebrated lines:

Qu'en un lieu, qu'en un jour, un seul fait accompli
Tienne jusqu'à la fin le théâtre rempli.

To these were added the prohibition of the mingling of the comic and tragic in the same work; the necessity of putting the action in five acts; and of confining the verse to the strong, musical alexandrine.

CHAPTER II.

ALARCON'S LA VERDAD SOSPECHOSA.

Act I.

The play opens with the return of Don *García* from Salamanca to Madrid. He is accompanied by his tutor, a man of age and of much merit. We learn that because of the death of his eldest son, the father, Don *Beltrán*, summons Don *García* to Court to fill his brother's place. To Don *García* is given *Tristán*, a servant of the family, who is to serve him as counsellor and friend. We shall soon learn that *Tristán* is the ever-important gracioso, albeit a very different character from the usual gracioso.

After Don *García* and *Tristán* have left the room, Don *Beltrán* engages the tutor in conversation, endeavoring to learn what have been the vices of his son while he has been away at the University, and what kind of man he really is. He learns that Don *García* has been rather a model young man for his day and generation, and that he has only one serious fault, which shadows his virtues - a fault which has been so far uncorrected: he is given to lying; but in the opinion of the tutor, life in the Capital will doubtless correct this fault. This is a great shock to Don *Beltrán*, who says he would rather his son should waste his entire patrimony or spend his days and nights in gambling than lie. This fault will prevent Don *García* from marrying if it become noised abroad; consequently it now becomes the father's task to marry the son off quickly.

In the second scene Don *García* has discarded his student's dress, and donned the customary attire of the young Spanish galán. He and *Tristán* are in the Calle de las Platerías, the

fashionable promenade of the city. Don García is anxious to know how his new attire becomes him, and his question to that effect brings forth a bit of satirical comment by Tristán concerning the high, starched linen collars then in vogue. Then the conversation turns to the women of the capital and Tristán gives a very accurate classification of the kind Don García is apt to meet. Indeed Tristán's words are couched in such intelligent terms that Don García is much surprised at his wisdom. At this point, Don García is attracted by two young women in a carriage. He is so much smitten with one of them that he declares to Tristán that he wishes to be her suitor. Tristán is to inquire of the coachman (for the carriage has stopped in front of the shop) who the young ladies are.

Scene III. Fate took a hand in the game. One of the girls, Doña Jacinta, in getting out of the carriage, made a false step and would have fallen, had it not been for Don García, who seized the opportunity and jumped to her assistance. Then followed an exchange of compliments quite characteristic of the Spanish galán and the Spanish lady of society.

In Scene IV we have the first demonstration of the fatal habit of Don García. He declares to Doña Jacinta, the girl whom he has assisted, that he has loved her for a year, that he is an Indiano possessed of great wealth. When questioned by Doña Jacinta as to whether he is as close-handed as the Indians are sometimes reported to be, he answers by offering to buy out the jewelry shop for her. There may have been some fear in the heart of Don García, as to what would happen if she took up his offer, but fortunately for him, the day was saved by Doña Jacinta's tact.

In scene V, *Tristán* tells us that he has learned from the coachman that the more beautiful of the two girls is called *Doña Lucrecia de Luna*; that he has not learned the name of the other young lady but he has learned where she lives. *Don García* immediately concludes that *Doña Lucrecia* is the one to whom he has spoken. *Tristán* very sagely pronounces the other girl the more beautiful because she possesses a trait rare in women, that of keeping silence. As a matter of fact *Don García* has spoken to *Doña Jacinta*, the very girl his father has chosen to be his wife. This mistake in names gives rise to all the complications which appear from now on in the drama.

Scene VI introduces to us two new characters, *Don Juan de Sosa* and *Don Felix* his friend. *Don Juan* is much wrought up over a very elaborate entertainment, given by his rival to his sweetheart, the night before, on the banks of the river. *Don García* happens to overhear part of *Don Juan's* remarks, as he comes up to salute his two friends whom he has known at Salamanca. After an exchange of flowery salutations, *Don García* asks *Don Juan* why he is so excited. *Don Juan* seems not over anxious to talk about it to *Don García* and he gives only very meagre details. The habitual inclination of *Don García* is too strong to be resisted and he intimates that he was the one who gave this entertainment with its dancing, music, fireworks and supper. Pressed for an account he gives one so vividly that for a brief moment *Don Juan* forgets his jealousy in his admiration of the brilliant narration. *Tristán* stands aghast at the lies of *Don García* but cannot suppress an aparte to the effect that he can, on the spur of the moment, paint a banquet so well, that it seems like truth itself. The carriage of *Doña Lucrecia* passes and

as Don García follows it with his heart in his eyes, Don Juan de Sosa is quite convinced of the truth of all that Don García has said.

Left alone together in scene VII, Tristán presses Don García for an explanation of his action. Don García says he will stand a much better chance of attaining his desires if the lady believes he has loved her in silence for a year, and if he is something more than a mere student from Salamanca. This Tristán is willing to admit, but what about the entertainment just described by Don García? Don García's excuse for this fabrication is that he will never be out-done by anyone in the matter of bragging. "All right," says Tristán, "you'll be the laughing-stock of the capital if your trick becomes known."

The scene(VIII)now changes to the room of Doña Jacinta in the house of Don Sancho, her uncle. Here are assembled Don Beltrán, García's father, Don Sancho and his niece Jacinta. Don Beltrán and Don Sancho have planned to marry García and Jacinta, but naturally wish to consult Jacinta in the matter. Don Beltrán tells Jacinta that he will be greatly honored by her consent, that she already knows his position in society, his wealth, etc. It only remains for her to be satisfied with the personal appearance of García. The father says he will gladly bring García to see her but that she will find him somewhat reddened by the sun, since only yesterday he had made the trip from Salamanca to Madrid. Doña Jacinta does not give her consent immediately, for in a matter so weighty, haste would indicate that a woman either had little brains or was in a hurry to get married. Therefore she suggests that during the usual afternoon paseo, Don Beltrán shall ride by

on horseback with his son, while she examines Don García from behind her balcony screen. Don Beltrán says he will return in the evening for her answer. This seems to Jacinta rather soon. She is, of course, ignorant of the reason Don Beltrán has for wishing to marry off his son so quickly.

Doña Jacinta and Isabel are alone in scene IX, and the former confides to her maid that her heart really belongs to Don Juan de Sosa, but that the marriage has been held off so long (because Don Juan has not secured his knighthood) that she has given up the idea of marrying him and will give her hand to some one whom she finds worthy of it. Isabel, then, slyly remarks, that Jacinta has not been altogether indifferent to the Indiano whom she has met that morning. Jacinta admits that she has been impressed by him and that if the son of Don Beltrán were as discrete, as gentleman-like, and gallant as he, the marriage proposed would soon be consummated. "Well, you will see him this afternoon with his Father," says Isabel. Jacinta replies: "I shall see only his figure and his face. The soul which is so much more important, I should like to fathom by talking with him." How can this be arranged without offending Don Juan de Sosa? for Doña Jacinta does not wish to give up Don Juan until she is quite sure of another choice. The question is solved in this wise. Lucrecia has no jealous lover to fear, therefore let the meeting be at her house. Lucrecia and Jacinta can speak with the son of Beltrán from Lucrecia's window. Isabel is sent hurriedly to Lucrecia's home to arrange matters.

In scene X, Don Juan comes to Jacinta's home and upbraids her for her fickleness and her acceptance of the entertainment given

her by García. She denies any knowledge either of the incident or the man in question, but Juan de Sosa does not believe her.

Act II.

The second act opens with García reading the letter which he has received from Lucrecia, written for Jacinta and brought by Camino, the servant of Lucrecia. García is delighted at securing an appointment with his adored, still believing that Lucrecia is the one to whom he has spoken in the morning. Camino, upon being questioned by García gives an account of what his mistress will finally inherit in wealth, and of her family pedigree, adding that her family is so well born that she merits a King for a husband. Camino leaves promising to come for García at 10 o'clock at night to take him to the Calle de Vitoria where Lucrecia lives.

Left alone with Tristán (Scene II), García reiterates his belief that Lucrecia was the name of the more beautiful girl to whom he had spoken in the morning, for the other girl would have no reason to write to him. Tristán says it seems evident, but that his master will surely know when night comes since he will recognize her in talking with her.

The next four scenes are short. Scene III García receives a challenge for a duel from Juan de Sosa, which he can not understand. "How", he says, "can I have offended Juan when I arrived only yesterday?" Scene IV Tristán inquires the reason for his master's sudden change of color. García refuses to disclose the cause and asks for his cape and sword. Scene V Don Beltrán tells García that they are to go out on horse-back on an important matter of business. Scene VI Don Beltrán inquires of García where he is going when the sun

is so high in the heavens. García replies that he is going to play a game of billiards with his neighbor. The father is not pleased with the evident desire of the son to become acquainted with the whole neighborhood in such a short time after his arrival.

Scene VII shows to us again the grief-striken father. He hasn't been able to rid himself of the painful thoughts, born when told of his son's fault by the old tutor. He now undertakes to question Tristán. "You have been with him all the time," says Don Beltrán, "what can you say of him?" Tristán wants to spare his old master and attempts to hedge but Don Beltrán is too persistant and finally Tristán is forced to admit that García has told five or six lies. Don Beltrán gives vent to his grief once more and is more than ever firm in his decision to arrange his son's marriage quickly. So he sends Tristán to order the horses made ready for the afternoon's ride.

Scene VIII takes us to a room in Jacinta's home. Here are Jacinta and Isabel the maid, who has returned to tell her mistress that Lucrecia has written the note, as agreed, to García and that Camino was dispatched with it. Then looking from the window Isabel exclaims that Don Beltrán is coming on horseback and by his side rides the Indiano of the morning's adventure. Jacinta is severely critical of a man who will lie as García did, but is finally won over by her maid's reasoning that it has been García's way of winning her affection. / "I am satisfied with his appearance," she says, "the father desires it, the son loves me; the marriage is as well as made."

Scene IX shows us father and son together on the famous paseo of the Atocha. This scene is one of the most effective and

one of the most intimate of the drama. The character of Don Beltrán is also finely drawn in this scene. Don Beltrán first calls the attention of García to the horse he is riding and to the pleasure his dead son took in the animal. Then suddenly García says, "Now that the quiet of the Atocha invites it, sire, tell me your wishes." "Better would you say, my sorrows", answers Don Beltrán. Then the father asks - "Are you a gentleman, García?" If we did not know the other side of García's character his reply would be exquisite. "I am your son." Then Don Beltrán sets forth what are his ideas of a true gentleman and ends his exposition in a reprimand for García's awful fault of lying. One might think that García would feel some remorse after hearing his father's words, but no! "Who-ever said that I lie, has lied" he exclaims. Don Beltrán then informs García how much his character will be damaged if the news of his fault get abroad, and that he has arranged a marriage for him with an honorable house.

To save himself from a distasteful marriage, not knowing that the girl he loves and his father's choice are one and the same, he invents a wonderful tale of a marriage contracted while a student at Salamanca. There he had met a lady and one night had been received into her room. Unfortunately, Don Pedro, her father, had surprised them and he had only enough time to be hidden behind the bed. Don Pedro was about to leave the room when a watch which García carried began to strike the hour. Sancha explained to her father that it was a watch which her cousin had sent her to be repaired, since there were no watchmakers in his town. Don Pedro said he would take charge of the watch for her. Frightened, she managed to get the watch from García herself, but as she turned

away the chain caught in *García's* pistol and discharged it. *Sancha* fainted, Don Pedro ran out calling for aid, and the brothers of *Sancha* and the household servants came to Don Pedro's support. *García* defended himself until his short sword broke, whereupon he was obliged to retreat again to *Sancha's* room. She had recovered her senses, and when it became evident that *García* could not hold out much longer against such odds, she slammed the door, shutting them in together once more. Against the door they piled all the furniture, but nothing availed against the rage of the family and the barricade was broken down. *García*, facing death at the sword's point, and seeing *Sancha's* courage and affection in aiding him, offered to marry her. Don Pedro secured from the Bishop the permission for the ceremony to take place at once. *García* had not previously told Don Beltrán because he feared the latter's displeasure at his having married a poor, though noble, wife. Here again we see the noble character of Don Beltrán in his reply: "If she be noble, what matters it whether she be poor or not?" Don Beltrán was entirely deceived by *García's* fantastic tale, and proceeded toward Jacinta's house in order to tell her of the turn matters had taken.

García's absolute disregard for truth and his opinion of the value of lying are shown in Scene X, after his father has left him. "The old man is persuaded," he says. "Who will say that lying is without profit and pleasure?" Then he suddenly awakens to the fact that Juan de Sosa is waiting for him. "Strange things are happening," he says. "I came only yesterday and already, I have fallen in love, been challenged to a duel, and had a marriage arranged for me.

In Scene XI Juan and García have met and the latter asks what has been the cause of the challenge. Juan tells him that if he (García) has been in the capital a month, as he says, he cannot be ignorant of the fact that he is the suitor for the hand of the lady to whom García has given the entertainment on the river. By a new lie, García appeases the anger of Juan by saying that the lady to whom he gave his entertainment was a married woman recently come to Madrid and therefore could not be the sweetheart of Juan. Juan is satisfied with the explanation but García, now, insists on fighting since he has been brought to the duelling ground for that purpose.

In Scene XII the duel is interrupted by Felix, the friend of Juan, who declares that there has been no reason for the duel and after García and Juan have shaken hands, García leaves.

In Scene XIII Felix informs Juan how they had made their mistake. The coach they had seen was that of Jacinta but loaned by her to two young girls. The page of Juan who followed the coach supposed that the two girls were Jacinta and Lucrecia. Felix then says he has learned also that García had arrived in Madrid only the night before, had gone to bed and slept the whole night through. The tale of the festival and the marriage had been a lie, concocted by García. Juan wonders how a man so valiant as García can be such a liar. Felix sagely remarks, that lying is a custom, valor a heritage.

In Scene XIV we find García and Tristán en route to the proposed meeting at the window of Lucrecia. Tristán is somewhat pessimistic about the out-come of García's new story about his marriage in Salamanca. In the meantime Juan has been to see Jacinta to make his peace with her, and explain to her that it was García

who had described the wonderful festival on the banks of the river. This we learn from Jacinta who is telling it to Lucrecia while waiting for García to keep his tryst. When García is seen coming, Isabel is sent to keep a lookout, and give warning if either the uncle of Jacinta or the father of Lucrecia appears. Jacinta already has learned, of course, from Don Beltrán that García is married but she keeps her appointment, anxious, no doubt, to hear what he will say for himself. Under cover of the night García speaks to Jacinta, calling her, however, Lucrecia. He makes love to her, and then she accuses him of being married. He endeavors to persuade her that he made up the story to his father in order to escape a marriage which his father had planned for him and which was decidedly distasteful to him. But Jacinta, now well acquainted with his habit of lying, refuses to take any stock in what he says. His constant addressing her as Lucrecia, convinces Jacinta that he is not only a liar, but most fickle, while Lucrecia, who has been kindly disposed toward the young man from the very beginning, believes that García has transferred his affections to her. It is in this scene that García has stuck persistently to the truth and he is not a little disgusted at the out-come.

In scene XVI he says almost immediately "Truth is worth so little"; but Tristán is, as ever, ready with a sage reply. "The one who lies jokingly, is not believed when he tells the truth."

Act III.

Act III opens with increasing complications. Tristán has given to Camino a letter addressed to the latter's mistress Lucrecia, although really meant for Jacinta as the girl whom García loves. Lucrecia, believing the letter is really meant for her, is prone not

to believe *García* because of his lying propensity. Camino tries to convince her that *García* loves her because he (Camino) has seen him pace back and forth in the street, night and day and attentively watch her window. Lucrecia arranges to have Camino make *García* believe that she has destroyed his letter and depends also on Camino's ingenuity to warn *García* that if he wishes to see her he will find her in the afternoon in the Church of the Madalena.

Scene II takes us back to *García*'s home there to find him with his Father. Don Beltrán is advising his son to go to Salamanca and bring his wife to the capital. *García* says such a thing is impossible at the present time as his wife is in a delicate condition and travelling would be dangerous for her. Don Beltrán is much surprised by this piece of news, but father-like is delighted at the prospect that he may have a grand-son. Don Beltrán asks *García* his father-in-law's name. "Don Diego", sayd *García*. "It seems to me you called him Don Pedro once before", says Don Beltrán. *García* is ready: "He is called by both names: Don Pedro before he inherited his estate, and Don Diego after." This is a custom that Don Beltrán admits is fairly frequent in Spain.

Scene III. *García* realizes that he has come almost to the point of being caught by his father in a falsehood. Again it is Tristán who wisely says: "He who lies must needs have a good memory and much ingenuity." When Don Beltrán leaves his son, Tristán informs *García* that Camino, the servant of Lucrecia, is sure of his mistress's affection for *García*, and that Lucrecia will be at the Madalena in the afternoon.

In Scene IV Lucrecia and Jacinta are on their way to Church. *García* is the subject of conversation. Lucrecia tells Jacinta of

García's letter and of its seeming truthfulness. Jacinta is convinced that García has transferred his affections to Lucrecia, and tells her she is not surprised, for Lucrecia's loveliness is no mean thing. Lucrecia draws García's letter from her pocket to read.

The two girls have now reached the Church and are in one of the chapels. Lucrecia has given the letter to Jacinta to read (Scene V). While she is reading aloud García enters the chapel unnoticed and recognizes his letter in Jacinta's hand. This of course adds just a little more to the complication arising out of the confusion of names. Seeing his letter in her hands he immediately addresses her as "Lucrecia". It would seem as if it were time for the two girls to discover that García is laboring under a mistake. But not so. Lucrecia believes that García is making love to her by night while he courts Jacinta by day. Jacinta thinks it is but another of García's inventions to deceive. He is feigning before Lucrecia, so as not to anger her. At the end of the scene García is not set aright. The voice is that of the one he loves, but the darkened chapel and the useful Spanish mantilla have not allowed him to see the face of the one to whom he has been talking.

In scene VI, García discloses to Tristán that he is anxious that his marriage take place soon but he has noticed that Jacinta has not been willing so far to accept his statement about the story of his marriage. It is easy enough to prove the truth that he is not married because Salamanca is not so far away as Japan and there must be some witness who could vouch for the truth. Tristán suggests Juan de Sosa. Tristán hasn't heard anything about Juan de Sosa since the day that he (Tristán) gave García a note from Juan. García, to satisfy Tristán's curiosity, gives a vivid account of a hot duel

which he and Juan had fought. García says that he had cut Joan's head open so that his brains were strewn along the country-side. "Poor Don Juan" says Tristán, "but isn't this he who comes?"

Then García must invent another tale (Scene VII). It isn't so very surprising to be cured so soon. "I know a balsam," says García, "that works like magic." When Tristán would learn what this balsam is, García says that he can't learn it because it is in Hebrew. "Do you know Hebrew?" asks Tristán. "Better than Spanish" says García, "I speak ten languages."

Don Beltrán appears with Juan de Sosa. Beltrán has evidently asked Juan whether there lives in Salamanca a lady whose name is Sancha and a gentleman who is called Don Diego and Don Pedro, and Juan has said that he knows none.

Beltrán left alone (Scene VIII), awaits the approach of his son, meanwhile giving vent to his hurt feelings and blaming himself for having believed in his son when he already knew his habit of lying. Beltrán never seems irritated by his son's actions. It is always a hurt, pained attitude that he assumes. "Is it possible that I, who love truth so firmly, have engendered such a son?" Again García listens to a reprimand from his father for his lies concerning his feigned marriage. García explains it is all because he wanted to marry Lucrecia de Luna, and not Jacinta, his father's choice. Beltrán, not willing to be taken in any more, disdains to accept his son's statements. García calls in Tristán to attest to the truth which he now speaks. "Aren't you ashamed" asks Beltrán, "to have to have a servant give credit to your words?" Then the father relents. "I'll find out first about this story of a marriage at Salamanca, you have deceived me so much; and if everything is as

it should be, then I'll speak to Juan de Luna and Heaven grant that he give you Lucrecia.

The action now hurries on to a *dénouement*. Scene IX is in a room, looking onto the garden, at the home of Lucrecia. Juan de Luna and Sancho, Lucrecia and Jacinta are to sup together and while waiting for the two girls to appear, the old men chat about the weather, and Juan de Luna is loud in his praises of his daughter Lucrecia. They are interrupted by the appearance of Juan de Sosa (Scene X) who has hurried to impart the news to Sancho that at last he has secured his entrance into the Order of Calatrava, and that now Jacinta may fulfill her promise to marry him.

Beltrán appears with García at this unusual hour (Scene XI) to plead for the hand of Lucrecia. Juan de Luna readily agrees since García voices his father's sentiments.

The two girls now come in with Sancho, who had gone into the garden to tell Jacinta of Juan de Sosa's success. Sancho tells the two young lovers to go to their happy sweethearts. Both young men go toward Jacinta, but García is stopped by Juan de Sosa who says: "There is Lucrecia." Then García realizes he has made a mistake in names, but to Jacinta he says: "You were the one I asked for and you are the one whom my soul adores."

Beltrán believes it is another trick of his son and says he must now marry Lucrecia or lose his life. To this Juan de Luna adds his threats. "I accept since I must" says García. It is from Tristán that we have the last words and they serve to show the punishment of García. "Yours alone is the fault. For if from the first you had told the truth, now is the time when Jacinta would be yours to enjoy. ---In the mouth of one who is accustomed to lie, the truth is suspected."

CHAPTER III.

CORNEILLE'S TREATMENT OF THIS MATERIAL - LE MENTEUR.

How does it happen that Corneille chose to write Le Menteur when he had devoted himself since the days of his early literary career to tragedy? He tells us, himself, in the Épitre which is found only in his editions of Le Menteur previous to 1660. "I have written Le Menteur", he says, "to satisfy those who love change and have asked for something to amuse them. When I wished to ascend to the heights of tragedy I dared not rely on my own strength, and so I took for a support the great Seneca. So when I resolved to pass from the heroic to the naïve I did not dare to descend from so high a place without a guide, and I allowed myself to be led by the famous Lope de Vega, for fear of losing myself in the detours of so much intrigue, as that which our Menteur formulates." In his Examen, appearing first in 1660, Corneille tells us that Le Menteur is partly a translation and partly an imitation. He leads us to believe that he would gladly have sacrificed two of his best works, could he only have been the author of his Spanish model.

In the Examen also he rectifies a mistake which he had made concerning the author of the original, having first ascribed it to Lope de Vega. This was in no way the fault of Corneille, for he had found it in the 22nd parte (Zaragoza 1630) of the comedias of Lope de Vega, an error due to the negligence of the publishers. Later a volume of Alarcón fell into the hands of Corneille. In it Alarcón declared the work to be his and complained bitterly of those publishers who had allowed it to appear under the name of another. Corneille thereupon corrected the mistake he had inadvertently made.

"You will find the subjects are entirely Alarcón's" he continues, "and I have endeavored to conform them to our rules and our customs. I have found neither among the ancients nor among the moderns anything which has pleased me so much. It is toute spirituelle from the beginning to the end, and one must be, indeed, de mauvaise humeur not to approve of the arrangement and plan, or not to admire the representation."

Corneille's first great French tragedy was drawn from a Spanish source. M. Marty-Laveaux says that Corneille rendered a great service to the French theater, when he brought to it for the first time a subject truly comique, without any pretension of modifying the fundamental thought, and which he reclothed in beauties of diction up till then unknown in that genre.

But, however little Corneille desired to change his material, he was handicapped by his Classic rules; he had to obey the conditions of his art and his school.

In Le Menteur the action extends over 36 hours and Corneille was forced to make many transformations which are not always to the credit of the French production. In the original the time between the recounting of the nightly festival (García's first lie) and the dénouement (his acceptance of Lucrecia's hand) is approximately three days.

The rule of the "Unity of Place" has interfered with Corneille more than either of the other rules, and has taken from the imitation much of the local color to be found in the original. Both, to be sure, lay their action in the capital. But Alarcón, according to his needs, places his scenes in various parts of Madrid, a procedure which is much more natural and entertaining and lends

more variety to the play. Despite his best efforts, Corneille had to use two places. But what is, perhaps, of greater importance is the fact that by not being forced by rule to confine himself to one place or time, Alarcón gives us a picture of the cultural conditions existing in his time, in romantic Spain.

Reference has already been made to the different forms of verse, which the Spanish poet had at his disposal. This gave variety to his composition, allowed him to express rapid dialogue, and to render in a terse form details of the action. None made better use of these different verse forms than did Alarcón.

The task of keeping to the ideas as expressed by the Spanish writer, and rendering them in the Alexandrine prescribed by Classic rule, was not easy. Thus arose that carefulness of execution, that finish so evident in the work of Corneille. Despite the sonorous dignity of this verse-form and despite the thirty-six rhythmic variations that Körting demonstrated (Encyklopaedie und Methodologie der Romanischen Philologie, Heilbronn, 1886, Vol. III, Pages 286-289) as possible within its limitations, it is self-evident that Corneille's work could with difficulty match the poetic beauty, grace and variety of his model.

The personages in Corneille are the same as in the original, except for some minor rôles, quite essential, however, to the Spanish version. The letrado, to whose direction García's education had been given, appears in the first scene and Alarcón uses him for his exposition of the antecedent facts. From no one else could come so naturally the report to Beltrán of García's habits. The uncle and guardian of Jacinta, and the father of Lucrecia do not appear in Corneille. We learn of the arrangement for the hands of the two girls only from the mouths of others.

Alarcón needed the father of Lucrecia for his dénouement, for it is only after Juan de Luna adds his threats to those of Beltrán, that García accepts the fate meted out to him. Here we have another of the "points of honor" so bound up in the intimate life of Spain.

The names in Alarcón's *comedia* all belong to Spanish life, while Corneille's are originally Greek, altho then current in France.

The names of *Lucrece* and her maid *Isabelle* are the only ones which Corneille has borrowed from the Spanish.

LE MENTEUR

Le Menteur of Corneille ushers us into the garden of Tuilleries, where Dorante and his valet Cliton have come for the usual afternoon promenade. Dorante has been studying law at Poitiers, but has gained permission from his father to give up law and assume the rôle of a gentleman and soldier. As such, his first desire is to please the ladies and he is questioning Cliton as to the best means to employ. Cliton informs him that he must make himself popular by being free in spending his money. By this it is seen that Corneille uses none of Scene I and only part of Scene II of the original.

M. Marty-Laveaux in his excellent study of Le Menteur and La Verdad Sospechosa calls special attention to the introductory scenes of the latter play. He claims that the great merit of the first scene of the Spanish version lies in the fact that thus early in the drama we gain a splendid idea of the character of García's father. We recognize his dominant character, are touched by his fatherly tenderness, and learn his high ideas of honor. According to the custom of the times, García had been entrusted to a learned

tutor when he was sent to Salamanca; and when García returns to Madrid under this tutor's care, the latter is questioned by Beltrán, concerning García's conduct. M. Marty-Laveaux might have added, except for the fact that he was analyzing Le Menteur rather than La Verdad Sospechosa, that the most natural time for Beltrán to learn of his son's failing was as soon as he arrives from Salamanca, rather than later.

What is there in Le Menteur, except the name, to indicate that the hero is a liar? We are not told at the very beginning that he is, and have to wait until he relates some highly colored story before we become acquainted with his propensity. The Spanish play, on the contrary, establishes right from the beginning a foundation on which to work and makes more real to us the indignation of Beltrán. Critics in general, have said that the fact that Beltrán knows the fault of his son and is willing to accept so much that he says as truth, makes Beltrán ridiculous. To my mind, Beltrán is never ridiculous. He is typically Spanish with his pundonor; a little weak in his love for García perhaps, since he lives only for him. If he is taken in by García's invented tales, he himself tells us why in his second reprimand to his son. He supposed García would have more respect for his gray hairs and not lie to him at the very time when he was being chidden for that fault.

In this very first scene we learn why Beltrán wants to marry his son quickly. Lying is such an ugly sin, in his eyes and evidently in those of his class, that he must marry off García before his fault becomes generally known. Géronte's desire to marry off his son is entirely foreign to the plot and therefore has no significance. If Dorante is to be sent away to war, he must be

married before hand, so that Géronte may have the prospect of grandchildren.

The conversation between master and gracioso in the first part of Scene II is also omitted by Corneille. Marty-Laveaux thinks that Corneille could not follow his model in those spicy jokes against the tyrannical fashion of the high, stiff collars then in vogue in Spain. A valet in France is never pictured as being conversant with astronomy as is the gracioso in Spain, so Corneille could not make use of the gracioso's astronomical classification of the belles of the court. What Corneille insists upon in his scene is not so much what one gives to attain one's desires as the way in which one gives. Alarcón insists very much on the precept of liberality in love. This is a thoroughly characteristic trait of gentle breeding in Spain. Witness Crespo's advice to his son in Calderón's El Alcalde de Zalamea. Jornada II:

Sé cortés sobremanera
Sé liberal y esparcido;
Que el sombrero y el dinero
Son los que hacen los amigos.

In Scenes II and III Corneille has followed fairly closely Scenes III and IV of La Verdad Sospechosa. Clarice makes a misstep and Dorante gallantly hastens to her assistance. He addresses her in a language quite characteristic of the times: the language of the Hôtel de Rambouillet - just as García addressed Jacinta in the Gongoristic style then in vogue in Spain. Dorante claims to have loved Clarice for a year, but instead of the rich Indiano of the original, which would have been a figure without any meaning in French society, Dorante pretends to have spent four years in

Germany, serving his country in a brilliant fashion.

Corneille in his Examen du Menteur, excuses himself for the use of the aparte. He says because he is copying Alarcon he is forced to lay aside his aversion to the aparte. In Scene III the apartes of Cliton are addressed to his master, and are accompanied by frequent pullings at his coat, which lends a more farcical element to the scene than do the side remarks of Tristán in the Spanish text. The incident which closes the scene in both comedies, is the same; the approach of the suitor for the hand of Jacinta (Clarice).

In Scene IV of Le Menteur (Escena V of La Verdad Sospechosa) the information brought by the valet concerning the more beautiful of the two girls is the same in both the original and the imitation. The mistake in names becomes the source of all the intrigue. Dorante believes that the information points to Clarice but believes her name to be Lucrece, while the valet is for "celle qui a su se taire". Clarice is the girl that Géronte has chosen for his son.

The scene in which Dorante gives his account of the fête, about which Alcippe and Philiste his friend are so excited, is hardly an improvement over the original. Corneille adapts himself to his time and his fête is French and not Spanish. Persuaded that Clarice is false, Alcippe, devoured by Jealousy, leaves Dorante, and hurries to the home of Clarice to confront her with his knowledge.

Cliton and Dorante left alone (Scene VI), the valet, wondering over the war-like exploits of his master and his display of magnificence, asks an explanation for his lying. A part of the reply is necessarily invented in the French, especially that relating to the military career. The reply concerning the fête is the same in both comedies; a desire not to be out-done in the matter of bragging. Both Dorante and García are proud of the fact that they

can obtain what they want in the world by knowing how to lie à propos.

Acte II.

The second act of Le Menteur opens at the house of Clarice in the Place Royale, to which has come Géronte to plead with Clarice that she accept the hand of Dorante. This corresponds to Jornada I, Escena VIII, of the original; but Alarcón has led us to expect such a scene whereas Corneille has given us thus far no reason why he should seek to marry off his son. Indeed this is the first introduction we have to Géronte. At the interview, in the original, is present the uncle of Jacinta, while in the imitation Géronte and Clarice are alone and there seem to have been no preliminaries leading up to the demand of Géronte. This is rather an unusual procedure in France, but as Corneille was obliged by classic rules to exclude from his plays characters which were not essential to the plot it is evident that he considered the guardian of Clarice superfluous.

Clarice expresses a desire to see Dorante before giving her answer and Géronte agrees to detain his son beneath her balcony so she may have a good look at him.

Left alone with Isabelle, her maid, she admits that she is tired of having her marriage with Alcippe put off for trivial reasons and that she is willing to marry Dorante, if he please her; but she will not break with Alcippe until she has Dorante in hand.

Corneille has sought to find a reason for the putting off of the marriage of his heroine, but thereby weakens the character of his heroine. She is a cold reasoner. The fact that Alcippe's father has put off, first for one reason and then another, the com-

ing from Tours so that the marriage can take place, she considers as a disapproval of the match and so she is willing to treat with another. Jacinta, of the original, is more sentimental and more agreeable; and decides against Juan de Sosa because he has not secured his knighthood, which is essential to their marriage. Jacinta is much more concerned about the love in the matter than is her counterpart, Clarice, but it must be remembered that with Corneille love played but a secondary rôle.

Corneille carries over into the French the arrangement made for talking with García (Dorante) altho' it is hardly fitting on the French stage. The constraint in which young girls were held by Spanish customs seems to justify them in using some ruse to talk with whom they wish.

Alcippe, after having heard Dorante give an account of his magnificent fête, rushes to the home of Clarice to accuse her of her fickleness. As in the original, she knows nothing about either Dorante, or the fête. Alcippe is dismissed, as the father of Clarice "va descendre".

The monologue of Alcippe which follows is entirely Corneille's own and does not appear in the original at all. It is just added by the French author to let his audience know that Alcippe is angry enough to provoke Dorante to a duel.

Géronte and Dorante appear in the Place Royale for a regular afternoon promenade. Géronte saying that he is tired from walking, pleads for a short rest, which rest is taken before the house of Clarice, as agreed. While Géronte proposes to Dorante the marriage which he has planned for him and Dorante manufactures a lie about a former marriage so as to escape from the one proposed by

his father, we are told by Corneille in a stage direction (Ici Clarice les voit de sa fenêtre, et Lucrèce, avec Isabelle, les voit aussi de la sienne.); and he has chosen to cut out the amusing scene between Jacinta and Isabel, as they watch from the window the coming of father and son and discover that the person proposed as a husband for Jacinta (Clarice) is the young man met in the morning. Corneille also suppresses the father's reprimand in this scene and transfers it to his fifth act, for the very obvious reason that he has reserved the knowledge of Dorante's failing until near the end, in order to bolster up his feeble dénouement.

In the French version Cliton has been a silent listener to his master's story given to his father Géronte; but in Acte II Scene VI, Corneille has given us a charming scene between master and valet which is entirely his own. I have already alluded to the fact that critics have called attention to Beltrán's credulity when he knows his son lies and that Corneille in his play did not allow Géronte to learn it so early because it weakened the action. Witness Cliton's remarks near the end of the scene now under discussion. Cliton knows his master's failing from the very first of the play, yet he says after Géronte has left;

Obligez, Monsieur, votre valet:

Quand vous voudrez jouer de ces grands coups de maître,
Donnez-lui quelque signe à les pouvoir connoître;
Quoique bien averti, j'étois dans le panneau.

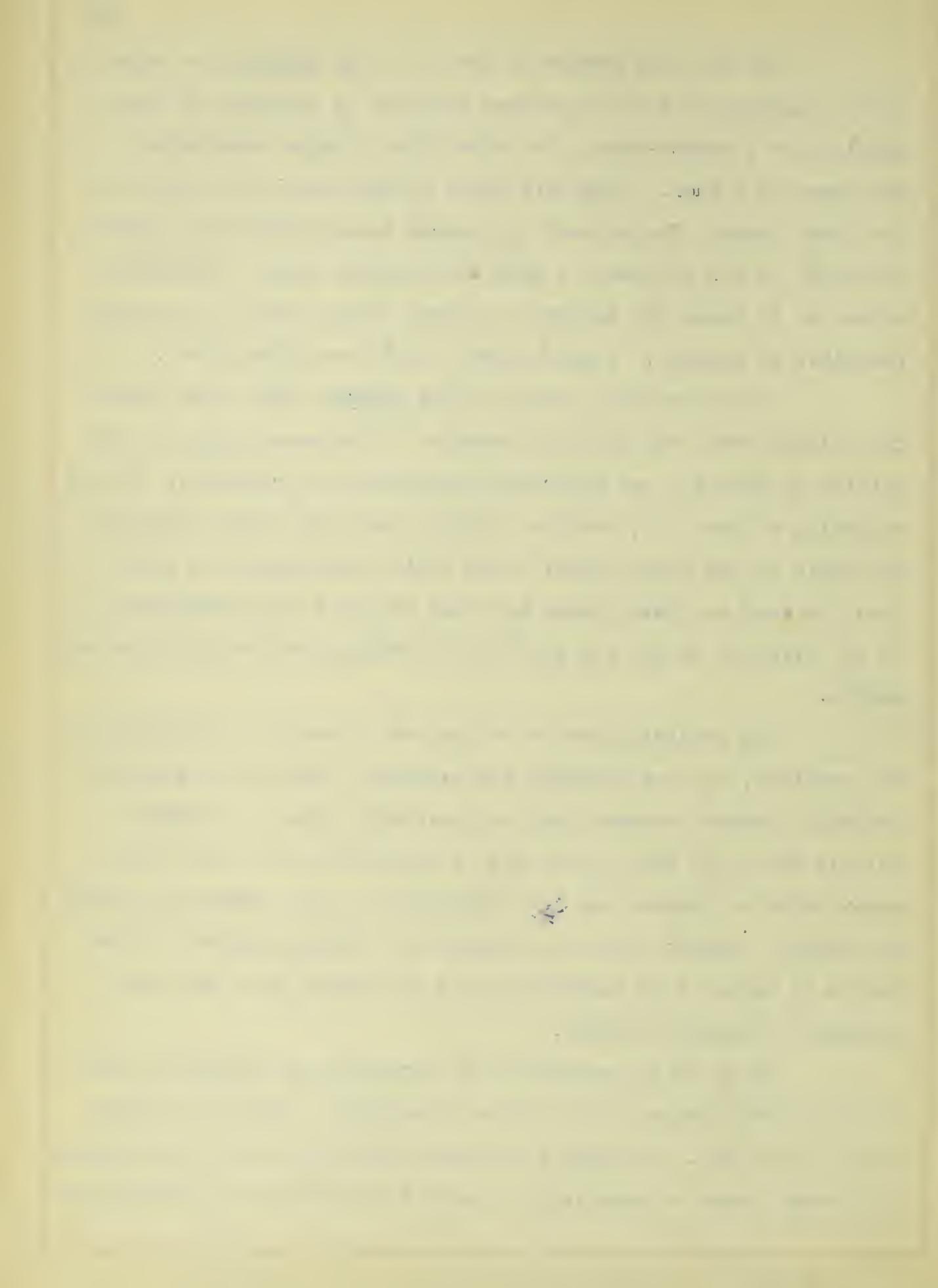
In the Spanish version Tristán does not accompany Beltrán and García on their ride before the house of Jacinta nor to the Park of the Atocha, and it is only several scenes later that he learns from his master the unusual account of the Salamanca marriage.

The last two scenes of Acte II of Le Menteur are taken up by the incident of the two letters received by Dorante, one from Lucrece for a rendez-vous, the other from Alcippe containing a challenge to a duel. These are given to him while he is still in the Place Royale. In the text of Alarcon these letters are handed to García in his own home, a much more natural place. Corneille allows us to learn the contents of these letters only by the conversation of Dorante. Alarcon makes García read them aloud.

In the original edition of Le Menteur, 1644, the letter from Alcippe was read aloud by Dorante. It appeared again in the edition of 1656 but was afterwards suppressed by Corneille. At the beginning of Acte III, Dorante, Alcippe, and his friend Philiste are again in the Place Royale. From their conversation we learn that the duel has taken place and that Philiste has interrupted it. In the original we see the duel in the Atocha after Beltrán has left García.

The remaining scenes to the end of Acte III correspond to the original, but are abridged and narrowed, even to the point of becoming obscure, whereas they are perfectly clear in Alarcon. This is not to be laid to the art of Corneille but to the rules under which he labored and the differences in the customs of France and Spain. Alarcon was able to carry his intrigue further, allow García to invent more fantastic tales and become more than ever confused in regard to names.

It is to be regretted that Corneille was forced to leave out the pretty scene in the Church of Madalena. Here two things stood in his way. He could not change his scene, and it was against the French sense of propriety to carry the intrigue of a drama into



a holy place (Marty-Laveaux). In Spain the Church is often chosen in real life to be the place where galantries are accorded the women and it has become a rendezvous for lovers even though the girl be accompanied by her faithful duenna.

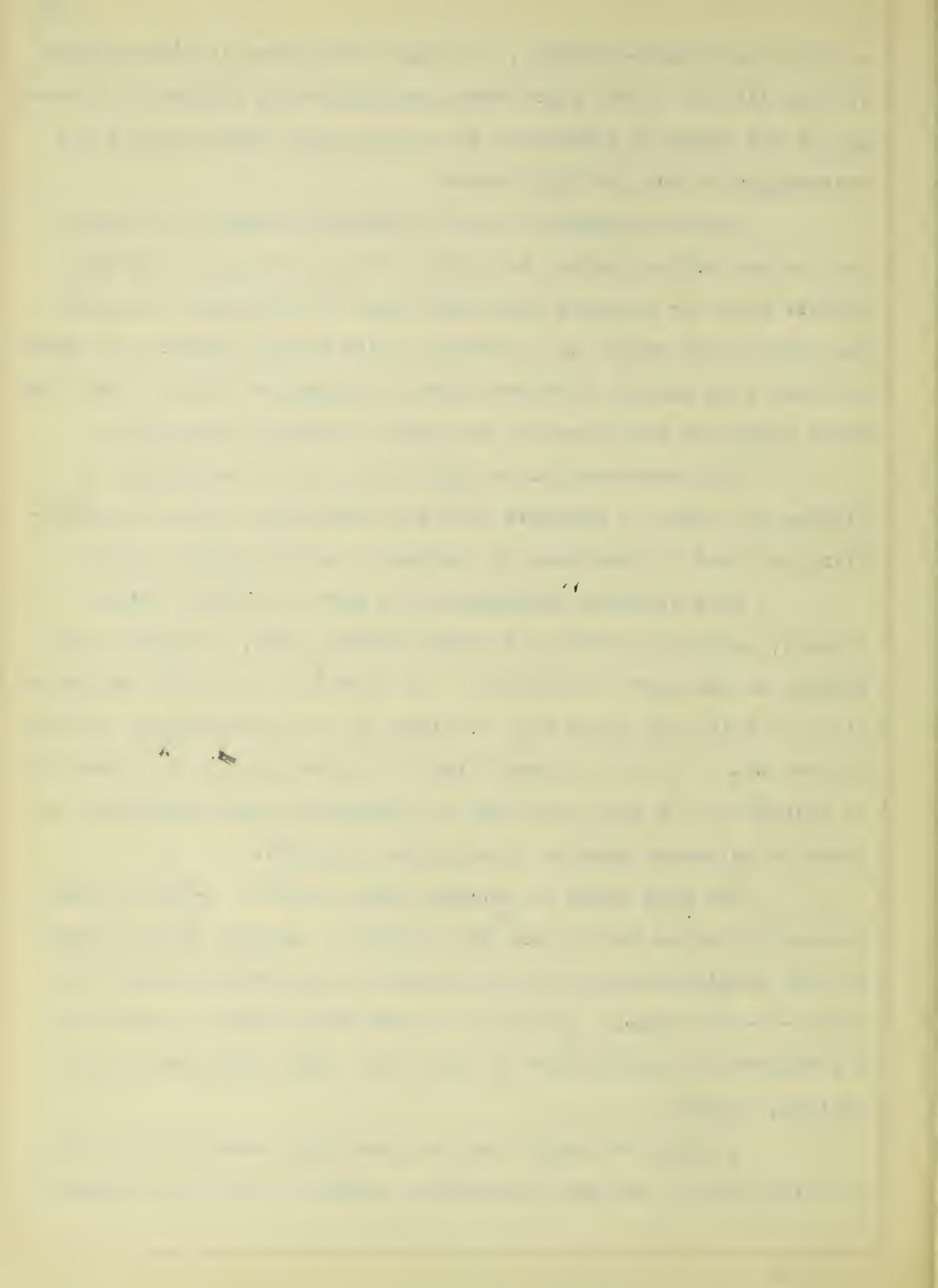
In the beginning of Acte IV Dorante recounts to Cliton that he has killed Alcippe in a duel. This account is very much shorter than the original and varies from it in several respects. The duel is the result of a quarrel of six months standing; an agreement had been made at Poitiers between Alcippe and Dorante that they would fight out their duel at the first favorable opportunity.

This conversation is interrupted by the appearance of Alcippe who comes to announce that his father has arrived from Poitiers and that his marriage to Clarice is now an assured thing.

This friendly attitude on the part of Alcippe toward Dorante, considering what has passed between them, is rather far-fetched on the part of Corneille. In Alarcon, it will be remembered, it is in this same scene that we learn of the final success of Juan de Sosa but it is not to García that he addresses the good news but to Beltrán at the same time that he informs him that there are no names in Salamanca such as those given by García.

The next scene is borrowed from Alarcon. Géronte seeks Dorante to induce him to send for his wife. Dorante has his story for not sending for her, as he has when he is cornered about his father-in-law's name. It is to be noted that Dorante is much more disrespectful to his father in this scene than García ever is to Beltrán. (Segall)

I shall not dwell upon the remaining scenes of this Act, in which Sabine, the maid of Lucrece, occupies a far too important



place. She acts as the go-between in the matter of notes, and is always on the look-out for the money reward that she is going to receive if she carries her mission to a successful end.

It is in the beginning of Acte V that Géronte learns of Dorante's great fault. He learns it from Philiste and he is not over much pleased by the manner of Philiste in the telling. Left alone there follows a short monologue which, although suggested by Beltrán, is very much Corneillian in tone. The French author could not wander far from his own field of tragedy. He was not at home in the intricate complexities of the capa y espada comedias of his neighbors across the Pyrenees.

The salutation of Géronte to Dorante as he appears - "Etes - vous gentilhomme?" - seems very much forced and is indicative of a very highly irritated state of mind. It is too sudden to be natural. He does not even address his son by name. How much more fitting is the careful leading up to the question by Beltrán on the quiet bridle-path of the Atocha: "Sois caballero, García?" Here it is in the tone of a serious and saddened father, mourning for the loss of his eldest son and grieving over the propensities of the only son left to him.

Corneille has taken from the two reprimands of Beltrán the material for that given to Dorante by Géronte; but the strong, eloquent rhythm of the Alexandrine makes the reprimand of Géronte appear more violent.

Dorante, finally, convinces his father that the reason for his lying has been his love for Lucrece, and Géronte, anxious still to have his son marry, offers to intercede for him.

There remain only the two dénouements to compare: the

dénouements which have caused discussion even from the time of Corneille. The liar in both plays marries Lucrece (Lucrecia) but the facts leading up to it are quite different. García is forced to marry Lucrecia whom he does not love. It was a punishment meted out to him for his ugly fault. A somewhat severe punishment no doubt, and in order to appreciate fully such an unusual circumstance, we have to remember that Alarcón was the Spanish dramatist who painted characters and almost always accompanied his creations with a moral.

Corneille changed his dénouement, thus holding to the rules of Horace and Aristotle that the object of poetry is to please, not to be useful. (See Corneille's Épître de La Suite du Menteur.) In his Examen he says "Pour moi, j'ai trouvé cette manière de finir un peu dure, et cru qu'un mariage moins violente seroit plus au goût de notre auditoire." That is why from the middle of Acte V, Scene VI, after Clarice speaks to her companion as Lucrece, Corneille indicates a changed attitude in Dorante toward Lucrece.

The scene between Dorante and the two girls is suggestive of the one of García in the church of the Madalena. Dorante is still laboring under a mistake of names. Dorante makes a passionate declaration of love to Clarice which angers Lucrece, for she had but the night before received a love letter from Dorante (of course, given to her by mistake, since it was meant for Clarice). It is Clarice's turn to become indignant when this letter is shown. A word from Clarice reveals to Dorante their true names. Dorante, in order to get out of the position gracefully, the position to which his lying has brought him, just keeps on lying. He declares to Clarice that he has been fooling her to repay her for playing

with him and swears that he has never loved any except the real
Lucrèce.

CHAPTER IV

CRITICISMS

Critics who have been over-extravagant in their praise have declared La Verdad Sospechosa to be the best play in the whole Spanish Theatre. The Count von Schack in his Historia de la Literatura y del Arte Dramático en España considers it to be a comedia of the first rank whose moral tendency in no wise minimizes its beauty. Its beauties are still more conspicuous, he says, when it is compared with the dry, colorless imitation by Corneille, in which one misses, or sees disfigured, all the traits of genius and wit of the original. Count von Schack adds that Corneille has taken a picture full of life and worth in all its personages and transformed it into an insufferable moral drama.

M. Petit de Julleville in his Notice sur Le Menteur says that Corneille owes much to the Spanish author but that the form is Corneille's own. (Therein, let it be remarked in passing, lies much of the beauty to be found in the French version.) The intrigue in Corneille's production cannot help being weak, because it is so little in accord with French customs. These gallant declarations of love born at first sight, these nightly interviews before a grilled window or below a balcony, these feastings on the water's edge, these serenades, all these are perhaps true in Spain. It remains exotic in France, and the setting, fictitiously carried over to the Tuileries, remains in fact in Madrid. The style and the wit are indeed French, the intrigue remains Castilian. The two pieces differ especially in the moral; it is vague in the French comedy, or rather entirely lacking. The last lie of Dorante is displeas-

ing, and furthermore comic to a mediocre degree.

Guillaume Huszár in his P. Corneille et le Théâtre Espagnol says: "In this direct imitation of the Castilian drama, Corneille was not fortunate. Between the original piece in three Acts, lively, varied, well-constructed, and its imitation in five acts and in Alexandrine, there is indeed a great difference which is not in favor of the latter. Adapted, the Spanish piece has lost its Romantic flavor. Its ingenious intrigue, which does honor to the brilliant mind of the Castilian dramatist, has been mutilated. The psychological observations emanating from a profound knowledge of human souls and human things, the moral reflections, all are neglected."

M. Ch. Marty-Laveaux in his edition of the Oeuvres de P. Corneille, analyzes with much skill the drama of Corneille and compares it with La Verdad Sospechosa of Alarcón. He points out many faults to be found in the imitation, because of the restricting rules of the French stage, but praises those dramatic qualities which alone appear in the great French writer. He claimed to have spared himself the task of analyzing the work of the Spanish poet, (a difficult task, indeed), because of the consummate art with which a most complicated subject is treated.

Spanish critics regard La Verdad Sospechosa, as a work meriting high praise. Don Eugenio de Ochoa believes that Corneille's alterations were unhappy, but he considers the dénouement of the imitation, much more probable. He does not dispute the idea that a vice so disagreeable as that of García should be punished but he does consider it as very unlikely that García would have submitted in quite so docile a fashion except for the fact that his father made the absurd threat that he would kill him if he did not comply

with the plans arranged for his marriage with Lucrecia. Such a threat was not absurd in Spain, where parental authority was so sweeping, and where the point of honor held such sway.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In the preceding pages I have endeavored to set forth the manner in which Corneille availed himself of the material which gave to French literature its first "comédie de caractère." If the strict requirements of the French theatre forbade Corneille to reproduce his picturesque model, it in no way interfered with his poetic genius or with his ability to handle a subject in such a way as to make it acceptable to his own nation. It is, perhaps, due to these very restrictions, that Corneille has been able to fascinate his hearers and his readers by his use of the rich sonorous Alexandrine; that he has in a few situations of Le Menteur exhibited his own wonderful conception of intrigue, which bordered on the tragic.

For two centuries the French theatre labored under the yoke of prescribed Rules, and its fanatic desire to imitate the ancients. If it is to this that we must attribute most of the defects of Corneille's Le Menteur when compared with its source, it is also to this that we owe most of the beauties to be found therein: defects and beauties that it shared with the rest of the French Classic theatre.

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